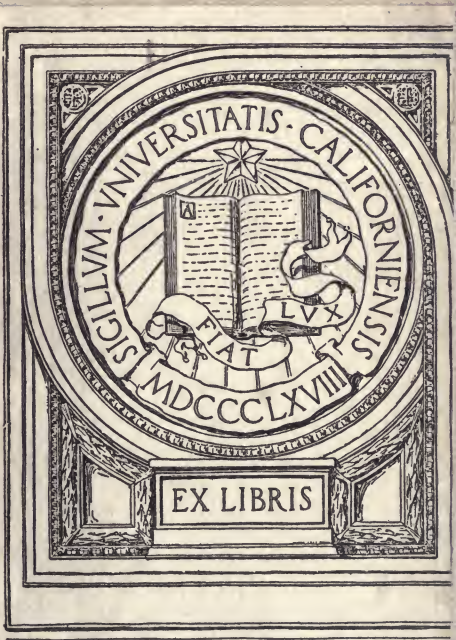
953
R313

C160254

21/-


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

953
R313

SBN
22

from the Auth
R a Lud 2 F 2 2 - 12

MOUNT EDGCUMBE,

A

POEM.

BY

CYRUS REDDING.

Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
Trita solo : juvat integros accedere fonteis,
Atque haurire : ———
LUCRE. lib. 1. v. 925.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES AND ORME AND REES AND CURTIS, PLYMOUTH; AND SOLD BY ALL THE BOOKSELLERS.

1811.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Main, Printer, Plymouth.

TO

HIS FRIEND,

RICHARD GURNEY, JUN. ESQ.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THE GREATEST SINCERITY,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

645220

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/mountedgcumbepoe00reddrich

PREFACE.

The following Poem is sent into the world, not with a presumptuous hope of eclipsing other writers on Local Scenery, nor with a view of exciting extravagant commendation, to which it can have no claim: the subject admits of poetical embellishment, and forms in itself, a union of the most rare and essential qualities, which constitute the beautiful and picturesque.

Johnson ascribes to Denham the invention of that species of poetry, which the latter writer used in his poem of Cowpers-hill, commonly denominated "local," and which Pope notices in his celebrated descriptive poem of Windsor Forest. Some landscape is to be described, and adorned with the embellishments of poetry; this, with incidental retrospects of history, and the thoughts incited by meditation on the chosen spot, accord-

ing to the idea of that great critic, constitute local poetry. It must be obvious to every reader, that he is not to expect a Poem with a unity of Fable, containing a detail of events, or action, with a beginning, a middle, and an end; as the critics lay down the rules for a regular work; there being, from the very nature of the subject, no continuity of story, no foundation of connected events on which to build a regular superstructure. Irregularity, or rather diversity of description, intermixing narrative, historical fact and morality, is all therefore that a local Poem can be expected to consist of.

Local poetry, in respect to that of a more connected and regular kind, may be viewed in the light of a natural garden, unadorned, indeed, by the hand of art, but deriving beauties of a very superior kind, from the wild chance which has scattered its disordered scenery in artless profusion. It will be found, when it is well written, neither devoid of interest, nor so tedious as some poems of a narrative kind; where the mind of the reader is perpetually anticipating the succeeding periods and events. The invention, as well as the descriptive powers of the poet, are called into action in a proportional degree with every other species of poetical composition. Local poetry may principally be said to differ from the other classes of poetry, in the irregular and unconnected succession of the descriptive, narra-

tive, and inventive parts, and in its union of the three in itself.

It is certain that local poetry, in some degree, will ever possess claim to notice, from the commendations bestowed by the learned world upon poems of that nature, such as Cowper's Hill, Windsor Forest, Grongar Hill, &c. though the present rage for versified Romances, frequently taken from some historical fact, which is tortured and twisted from the truth to suit the purposes of the writer, cannot but afford rational ground for fear, that the taste of the age is degenerated. The most pernicious effects may also result from such interpolations as are now in use; in mistating facts, giving them a wrong colouring, and destroying the credit of historical testimony. The fascination poetry possesses, will often persuade men contrary to their judgments; as when it gives great and magnanimous qualifications to some bloody tyrant of history, and paints him as a hero. The historian becomes discredited, in proportion as the public mind is influenced by such counter-statements; what was doubt to-day, is affirmed to-morrow, and the day following becomes the universal sentiment. Local poetry, though it may not on the above-mentioned account suit the taste of many persons, will still have some admirers, if it be from no other reason than the variety it possesses, and the different combinations of scene and imagery it affords in the hand of a skilful

poet. The author of Mount Edgcumbe, however, will never cease to regret, that the subject has not fallen into the hands of one more capable of doing it justice in the public view. To himself, the composition of it has afforded pleasure: and beguiled a few leisure hours, which some less entertaining pursuit might have occupied.

MOUNT EDGCUMBE.

Hic ver purpureum, varios hic flumina circum
Fundit humus flores: hic candida populus antro
Imminet, et lentæ texunt umbracula vites.
VIRG.

Mount Edgcumbe! pride of Britain's flow'ry meads,
With tufted woodlands crown'd, and sinking glades,
Bursting through ocean's wave and rearing high,
Thy tow'ring summit to the western sky:
Receive the votive tribute that I pay,
And to the Muse thy matchless charms display.
She can extend thy name o'er Britain's land,
Where'er the imperial sceptre bears command:

And grave it deep, where Fame's proud temple shines;
On walls of adamant, in golden lines:
Where lifted high, the Poet's deathless lay,
Defies the rage of time's destructive sway.—
Aid me, O Fame! and guide my feeble song,
A few short years, the stream of time along.

Come Contemplation! nor thy aid refuse,
Thou art the friend and sister of the muse:
Loveliest inspirer! in whose lowest praise,
No poet but would give his happiest lays:
Haste to the scene where Nature strives to shew;
No task too mighty for her power to do.
There lull'd by music of old ocean's roar,
In dying cadence on the pebbly shore:
There cheer'd by Nature in her verdant vest,
In bloom perpetual, and fresh fragrance drest;
Let us indulge the soul-inspiring strain;
Till night's dark mantle overspread the plain;
Twilight and Silence hand in hand unite,
And the pale star of eve lead on the night.

The lengthen'd vista stretching from the sea,
Invites the wand'rer on its grassy way;
All still and tranquil, but the gentle breeze
That breathing sighs, expires among the trees:
To where the turrets mark the upland height,
And strike with reverent awe the enamour'd sight.
There on the view the scene its pomp displays,
In one immense uninterrupted blaze;
Towns, villages, and woods, and mountains rise,
Blending their azure summits with the skies.
Here rocks on rocks the haughty waves restrain,
And islands rise triumphant from the main.
There the wide world of waters meets the sight,
And the blue wave sends forth a sparkling light.
While on the surge majestic, black and slow,
The swelling vessel cleaves the deep below;
The curv'd white sails the grateful breezes keep,
And waft the pond'rous burthen o'er the deep,
The obedient deep divides to yield it way,
And groaning opes a passage to the day.
Light skiffs, and painted galleys float around,
And distant masts the farther sea-scape bound;

Save where the eye no bound'ry can command,
But the green billows and the subject strand.

There where the terrace spreads its ample space,
Darkly reflected on the ocean's face;
The richest verdure and unfading green,
In wild luxuriance decorate the scene:
The walks of myrtle rising by degrees,
In devious windings, scenting every breeze,
Crown'd with arbutus, and immortal bay,
And laurestinus, in profusion gay,
Rival Arcadia or the Idean grove,
Long sacred to the fond delights of love—
While in the distance mingling with the sky,
Rough mountains lift their craggy summits high,
Where mighty Egbert with resistless power,
Bade all the fury of the battle lour;
Black on the Danes yet blacker crest it fell,
Dissolv'd in air their Raven's magic spell,
Forc'd them to fly from Albion's happy land,
And reach discomfited their native strand.

Now fallen ruins meet the enchanted eye,
Or nod responsive to the forest nigh,
Where the dark oaks, proud Albion's glory, tower,
Doom'd on some future day to prove her power.
From hence a speck the fisher's pinnace glides,
With gentlest motion on the yielding tides;
Slowly recedes before the lessening land,
By softest zephyrs o'er the ocean fann'd.—
So when some bird ascends the fields of air,
Till mounted high she but a spot appear;
She flies with steady wing before the wind,
And leaves the shadowy woodland far behind;
Parts from the sight amid the blaze of day,
And through heaven's azure field pursues her way.
Where are the scenes that oft in ancient days
Have gain'd the meed of universal praise?
The groves of Helicon are seen no more,
Their glories lost on this superior shore;
The nine soft streams that lav'd its verdant side,
Are now in fancy only seen to glide;
The nine soft streams have long since ceas'd to flow,
No more they wander in the plains below,

Their once fam'd ~~beauties~~ shores now a wide wilderness,
No more the sacred care of gods confess.

Hark! in that bay beneath the frowning height,
Where the white sea mark glads the Pilot's sight,
The seaman's voice swells o'er the rippling tide,
While echoing caves resound the accents wide;
All hands united on the decks are spread;
To lift the pond'rous anchors from their bed,
Unmoor the ~~haughty~~ hawtening ships, unbend the sails,
Aided by freshning winds and fav'ring gales;
With gentlest motion first, the vessels sweep,
Then in swift course they plough the glassy deep.

Where the green lawn extends to meet the tide,
New charms attract the view on ev'ry side.
There Art to please exerts her ev'ry skill,
Assumes new forms obedient to the will;
Italian fountains nature to deride,
Meet British taste, and Gallia's frippant pride.
Here orange groves their fragrance breathe around,
And flowers of every clime o'erspread the ground;

Cedars of Lebanon from Salem's land,
Mingle where British oaks majestic stand,
Beneath whose branches many a lesser tree,
From tempests covered, stands secure and free.
As when a nation claims Britannia's aid,
She on the suppliant casts her awful shade,
And bids it flourish, shelter'd from the blast,
While o'er its trunk her giant arms are cast:
Strong as the force with which she reins the waves,
Her mighty power the warring storm outbraves;
Scorning its utmost rage in fury hurl'd,
The proud supporter of a falling world.

Beneath the summit of that woody hill,
An ancient cave records the story still—
Where all around a grateful shade is spread,
And silence reigns, companion of the dead—
A limpid spring a rocky bason fills,
That trickling from above in drops distills,
Slow as the tears that in succession break,
When call'd by woe down Pity's holy cheek;

The glassy water ever clear remains,
No sluggish tinge its spotless surface stains,
Chilly as death the polish'd chrystal sleeps,
While from above the fretted marble weeps;
No change it bears from heats or wintry snows,
But one unvarying coldness ever knows.
A maid there liv'd in ages that are past,
With every virtue seated in her breast,
Straight as the pines that northern climes adorn,
Fair and unsullied as the blush of morn;
An azure zone her melting bosom bound,
Her robes of white a faultless form surround,
That half conceal the beauties they unfold;
While o'er her shoulders float her locks of gold;
Her dewy eyes a soft'ned light display,
Sweet as the stars that guide the seaman's way
O'er the broad deep: and whereso'er she mov'd,
Surrounding princes prais'd, admir'd, and lov'd;
Ethelia nam'd, from ancient kings she came
Of Cornwall's realm, once not unknown to fame,
Though now no traces of their power are left,
By Time and Fate of name and realm bereft.

Long proof to love, the maid with proud disdain,
Heard many a lover urge his suit in vain ;
Till one beyond the rest engag'd her heart—
What maid is proof to love's all powerful dart ?
Fair as Adonis was the matchless youth,
His soul was honour, and his word was truth ;
While skill'd alike the bow or sword to wield,
He knew no equal in the martial field.
As near the margin of the troubled sea,
He watch'd with her the billows break in spray,
From the high cliff's wide overhanging steep ;
A mountain breaker, foaming from the deep,
Struck with resistless force the trembling mound ;
Down sank with hideous crash the rocky ground—
Hurl'd in the bosom of the angry wave,
No human power the unhappy youth could save—
The wave recoiling bore him from the shore,
Deep in its dark abyss to rise no more :
The hapless maid the dreadful ruin view'd,
Grief stopp'd her utt'rance, petrified she stood,
The tears at last gush'd forth, day after day,
With fruitless grief and woe she pin'd away :

Seated beside the once lov'd chrystal spring,
Some plaintive song she oft would sadly sing,
Her wild eyes fix'd upon the faithless deep,
Alternate would she sing, alternate weep:
Till pitying heaven, with kind parental eye
Snatch'd the fair mourner to that brighter sky,
The port of heaven, the dwelling of the bless'd,
Where sorrow is not, and the wretched rest.

Hail! England, hail! how lovely are thy vales!
Thy hills how verdant, fann'd by genial gales!
No fierce volcano wraps thy fields in fire,
Amid no Samiel blast thy sons expire;
Perpetual joys thy happy meads adorn,
Thy peaceful meads that wave with yellow corn!
Driven from all corners of the world besides,
In thy green vallies liberty resides;
The rustic knows his right, and dares maintain,
And spurn the Tyrant from his small domain.
Not Hybla's honied land, nor Tiber's shores,
Nor where the Indian Sol's warm beam adores;

Nor Italy in all her ancient pride,
Nor Egypt's realm, where Nilus' streams divide,
The passing year, nor Afric's golden sand,
America's rich soil, nor Asia's land,
Through which Euphrates, ever hallow'd name!
Rolls now unnotic'd her translucent stream—
With thee, O Britain! ever can compare,
Or from thy praise detract the smallest share:
Woe, War, and Rapine, o'er their realms have spread,
And all their beauties, all their charms are fled.
O direful War! engend'ring deadly strife,
The child of discord, and the curse of life;
Why did the almighty Parent of the earth,
Permit thy monstrous and abortive birth?
He, in whose image truth and justice blend,
Nature's protector, and the good man's friend;
Who, when ~~he glances his~~ aroused his fierce indignant ire,
Bids empires perish, and whole worlds expire—
O happy days! by ancient Seers foretold,
When neither lust of glory, nor of gold,
Shall waste the earth, lay towns and cities bare,
And glut with human gore the fowls of air;

But Peace and Harmony, transcendant shine,
In native majesty and light divine.

Here all around is innocent and good,
Elisian bowers high rising from the flood,
Peaceful invite the wearied soul to rest,
Fit habitations for the immortal blest;
The whole appears in vernal beauty crown'd,
While genial odors rising from the ground,
Dispense perfumes wide o'er the land and sea,
Hang on the trees, and waft their sweets away
Through all the ambient air. Astrea here
Might still have linger'd from the heavenly sphere,
Nor fled at last beyond the reach of crimes,
That stain'd the earth through all its realms and climes.
Flora, Feronia, Pales here preside,
Near the stern god that rules the wat'ry tide.
Pan, Sylvans, Fauns, and all their fabled train,
In fields more fair than Enna's flow'ry plain,
View far below the regal Neptune sleep,
While Tritons sport along the glassy deep,

And powerless find the Siren's voice and lay,
To ruin draw them from their woods away.

But moving hence, ascend yon dizzy height,
Leave earth behind and tread the fields of light;
For there the sea, in exhalations lost,
Rolls cloud on cloud, and covers all the coast;
In whiten'd billows hides the world below,
And seems a plain of undulating snow:
The dazzling brilliance of its fleecy hue,
Bounded alone by heaven's unsullied blue,
The extensive landscape covers from the sight,
Its hills, vales, ocean, buried deep in night—
As when the banks, some mighty stream that bind,
Give way, forth burst the waters unconfin'd,
Wide o'er the plains the swelling deluge pours,
And woods, and cities in its course devours,
Till o'er the prostrate ruins rising deep,
Like a still lake the enfuriate waters sleep:
But the lone lofty height beneath the tread,
Which lifts beyond the tide its shaggy head,

In horrid solitude, amid the waste,
Seems like a monument of ages past,
That towering high smiles at the power of time,
And shall for ever tower, in state sublime.
Or as Mont Blanc, his summit pointed high,
In haughty grandeur o'er the lower sky,
While clouds beneath spread wide their varying forms,
Lifts his majestic head beyond the storms,
Nor heeds their rage, while on his hoary brow,
Sunshine and peace, their mingled charms bestow:
The instructive scene to man, presenting true,
Pictur'd oblivion to his mental view;
The mind imagines, buried in the wave,
Nought from the vast infinity can save,
And shrinks amid the grandeur of the scene,
Till the bright sunshine breaks the mist between,
And earth discloses; as by magic art
Now by degrees the fleecy clouds dispart;
To higher regions wing their rapid way,
Or in the vivid sun-beams melt away:
In one majestic blaze, the horizon clear,
Hills, ocean, rivers, woods and towns, appear,

The glowing landscape, rich in every hue,
Mingles in distance with th' etherial blue;
The nearer ground, gilt by the sun's bright rays,
To the rapt eye its glorious pomp displays;
The lark renews her song in air above,
And all again is harmony and love.

With light and airy step the nimble deer,
Skip o'er the turf and seek the covert near;
Here o'er the grass disport the gentle fawns,
There the white lambs are scatter'd o'er the lawns:
View the majestic stag, his noble gait,
His dappled coat, his horns and slender feet;
Majestic prey! mark'd for the hunter's call,
For savage pleasure doom'd by man to fall:
See now pursued, with quick and rapid pace,
He darts along, behind him far the chace;
Now tries the wood, the winding path explores—
Still driving on with yells and savage roars,
The hunters follow: now across the plain
With swiftest pace his footsteps dart again,

Quick as a meteor through the arch of night,
Outstripping in his speed the lagging sight;
Till tired and faint, he on his murderers flies,
Of life despairing, and in anguish dies.

In yonder road, majestic, black and bold,
See our tall ships their glittering flags unfold;
Our gallant ships! Britannia's boast and pride,
From storms and tempests safe at anchor ride.
Thence many a vent'rous chief has sail'd afar,
To meet the thunder of the doubtful war;
Amid its carnage offer'd up his breath,
And shouted Vict'ry! in the arms of death.

When o'er th' Atlantic wave in awful pride,
England's brave squadron swept the flowing tide,
Fair Vict'ry hovering, held a laurell'd crown,—
Gaul and Iberia shrinking from her frown—
O'er Nelson's head, her lov'd, her darling son,
The heir of fame e'er infancy begun:
But fate inwove amid the wreaths a thorn,
To wound the immortal temples they adorn:

For where the direful combat fiercest rag'd,
Where fire and thunder, toil, and death engag'd,
Where purple slaughter dy'd the affrighted sea,
And Death insatiate, snatch'd his destin'd prey,
Wav'd his pale banner in the ensanguin'd blaze,
And bade the mighty end their toilsome days,
The hero fell, his country's boast and pride,
And mid surrounding ruin nobly died.
Thus when creation's destined course is run,
And shrinking nature views the expiring sun;
Some awful sage, the last of human race,
Faith in his soul, and virtue in his face,
Unmoved shall brave the moment of affright,
While Chaos reassumes the crown of night,
And warring elements, resistless hurl'd,
Destroy the harmonious chain that binds the world—
He, firm in strengthened hope and conscious trust,
In death shall seal the triumphs of the just,
Ascend, and hail the high immortal quire,
While kindred angels tremble and admire.

Now all is still, the streamers pointing low,
Th' unruffled tides, that softly murmuring flow,
Reflecting all the clear inverted scene,
The landscape smiling, and the skies serene,
Picture the peace of heaven's unbeaten shore,
Of happy climes, where storms nor tempests roar,
Of golden ages, fam'd in poet's lay,
Eden's green garden, or the bowers of May!
Soft is the calm o'er all the senses spread,
The soul expands, all empty thoughts are fled,
The mind exalted, to the clouds aspires,
The bosom beats with more than mortal fires;
Adieu, the world, with all its busy cares,
Far be its sordid views, its dang'rous snares,
For higher joys hold their dominion here,
Apart from vulgar noise, and vulgar fear:
Here Nature offers her unbounded store,
And bids Philosophy the mine explore;
Here mild Religion may sequester'd fly,
And in her musings rapt, o'er-tower the sky
Here Love may linger, nature's darling child
With Peace, and Hope, and Meditation mild;

Here man his own mortality may mourn,
In plaintive sighs o'er soft Sophia's* urn,
And think if heaven forbids on earth to spare,
Whate'er is virtuous, amiable, and fair;—
How vain and transient are all human things,
The might of heroes, or the thrones of kings!

Bending the footstep through yon solemn shade,
Where the thick trees obscure the darken'd glade,
And gloom and melancholy over-spread,
The wide and waste dominion of the dead:
See marble busts, and fallen urns around,
With broken columns, cover all the ground;
While the dim shadows from o'er-arching trees,
The leaves scarce rustling to the passing breeze,
Bespeak the mausoleums silent cell,
Where Death and Ruin in grim triumph dwell.
E'en now may Fancy through the twilight glade,
Mark where illusive phantoms seem to fade,

* Countess of Mount Edgcumbe, in the gardens.

Or flit across the paths, ere glimmering light,
Like a faint star, relieves the expecting sight:
There Horror, half her heartfelt sighs represt,
Just heaves in tumult her disordered breast,
And frowns around—Where'er she casts her eyes,
Black shadows fall, and clouds obscure the skies—
But deeper shade her influence sheds around,
Where the white grave stones line the mossy ground,
Steeping the sepulchre in thicker gloom,
And height'ning all the terrors of the tomb.

In yonder arsenal lo! toiling man,
To labour fix'd, erects the mighty plan,
Of some great vessel, whose tremendous ire,
Shall speak in thunder and devouring fire:
There noises loud of ponderous hammers sound,
Dun smoke ascends, and tumult thickens round;
The neighb'ring shores with multitudes are lin'd,
And thousands more come pressing on behind;
While the vast surface of the silver tide,
Is cover'd o'er with boats on every side,

And Expectation scarcely breathing stands,
With eager look, and wide extended hands:
The signal given, no murmur now is heard,
From all the assembled thousands—not a word—
The waves forget to play, serene the sky,
The boatmen on their oars enchanted lie;
While 'mid a silence, deep, and still as death,
When e'en the winds restrain their balmy breath,
Majestic, tow'ring, vast, the vessel flies,
And thousand shouts re-echo'd, fill the skies.
Slowly at first and scarcely seen to move,
Along the sloping, smooth and unctuous groove,
Then gliding rapid through the yielding tides,
Her mighty keel the foaming wave divides,
While timbers creak, and smoke ascending high,
Proclaims of art the glorious victory;
Art, that o'er nature with a haughty hand,
Here holds, unchecked, her empire of command.

Whoe'er thou wert, that with a spirit brave!
First and undaunted plough'd the faithless wave,

Deucalion, Noah, whatsoe'er thy name,
Lost in the annals of resounding fame;
It was a mighty deed—no compass known,
By the dim feeble light of stars alone,
To see receding far thy native bay,
And lose mid watery wastes the light of day.
Yet little didst thou think in future time,
Phœnician fleets shou'd visit Britain's clime,
Judea's king to Ophir speed his way,
De Gama scorch beneath the Indian ray,
Columbus combat with th'Atlantic storm,
Dauntless in danger and with glory warm;
Or mighty Drake, with god-like courage crown'd,
Sail in proud triumph, all the globe around;
Still less that armies on the uncertain sea,
Should meet to die in war's destructive fray;
That on the stormy ocean, Britain's might
Should stand triumphant in the bloody fight,
Dye the green waves with Gallia's dearest blood,
And thus defend her empire on the flood;
Smile at the storms, subdue their utmost rage,
And all the terrors of the deep assuage.

Near yonder Islet, mark the bounded bay,
Whence mighty Drake forth issued to the sea,
With dauntless footstep trod the fragile board,
And sail'd through climes and oceans unexplor'd,
Compass'd the globe, with England's flag display'd,
And aw'd old Ocean with the mighty shade:
The vast Armada, arrogant, and vain,
Fraught with the flower and chivalry of Spain,
Threat'ning his native shore, from hence he view'd,
In moony form, advancing o'er the flood,
Then weigh'd his fleet, and thundering on the foe,
Hurl'd half his glory to the shades below.
There dying Blake his much lov'd country spied,
Hail'd the glad sight, then clos'd his eyes and died;
And thence the gallant Cook unfurl'd his sails,
To tempt the fury of Antarctic gales,
And left for seas unknown the British shore,
Destin'd by heaven to visit it no more.

Distant and dim, amid the wat'ry plain,
A slender column rises from the main,

Just seen as far as the strain'd eye can view,
And faintly severed from the horizon's blue:
Though lash'd by storms, oft buried in the waves,
It firmly all the tempest's horror braves;
A wondrous work! 'twas Smeaton's proudest boast,
To raise a building, distant from the coast,
To wage with ocean's power eternal war,
And guide the seaman from those rocks afar,
Where hapless Winstanly in evil hour,
Impell'd by fate's inevitable power,
And the fierce whirlwinds wondrous rage combin'd,
Sank in the deep, and left no trace behind.
A warning light it stands, when night has shed,
Her varied dangers round the seaman's head—
Like wisdom's spark, whose ever brilliant ray,
Steers erring man o'er life's tempestuous sea:
O may that spark my country's councils guide,
Point out her track, and o'er her prow preside!
While nations rage, and haughty foes molest,
May Victory smile upon her tow'ring crest;
Justice and truth be still the favouring gales
That urge her course and fill her swelling sails,

While at her helm some powerful steersman guides,
The mighty vessel o'er the rolling tides—
One that with steady hand the ship will rule,
From the just patriot's heaven-applauded school;
Know none as foes who love the public weal,
But hate the flattering courtier who wou'd steal
His country's rights: bid sycophants and knaves
Fly from his sight to herd with fellow slaves;
And boast no friends, unless the good and just,
The honest statesmen, faithful to their trust.
With such a chief, how safe in every gale,
Though all the united elements assail—
With such a chief!—but why the wish renew?
View England's Prince, to England's welfare true,
He, though in storms his country's bark is driven,
Shattered her keel, and lost the light of heaven,
Though ruthless ruin yawn on every side,
Shall o'er the waves her prow triumphant guide.

What crowds amid the green wood bend their way,
Happy to spend at ease the rural day,

Flying afar from bustle, strife and noise,
To gain an interval of peaceful joys;
Till tir'd of nature, trifling, empty, vain,
They seek fatigued, the smoky town again;
Uproar and revel, theatre and ball,
Pleasure or business, quickly bury all—
Yet there is one, who fond of secret shades,
Where no rude murmur haunts, or noise invades,
Amid these groves cou'd pass his every hour,
Beyond the reach and insolence of power;
There with the Muse poetic visions see,
Image the records of futurity,
From history's page her varying scenes unfold,
The crimes of monarchs, and the lust of gold,
Wars direful fray, in bloody lines display'd,
And cruel wrongs by righteous heaven repay'd;
Or study yon bright stars that gem the sky,
Praising the power, that hung their orbs on high,
Mantling the earth with light; in whose great hand
Suns, systems, planets, stars, self balanced stand;
Lament the reign of error o'er the mind,
And leave all grov'ling thoughts and cares behind.

Far in the distance, see the expanded sail,
Slow moving on before the gentle gale;
Soft break the surges on the level sand,
The ear can scarce the dying sounds command.
The expansive sea as one smooth mirror bright,
The billows lull'd, and silent as the night,
The soothing wind, scarce felt in gentle play,
Wafting a sound that says, or seems to say,
"Deceitful stillness! e'er the first born Night
Drives her black car triumphant o'er the light,
The thund'ring waters shall ascend on high;
Lightning and tempest, rend the low'ring sky;
This lovely scene shall quickly disappear;
Destruction, Death and Tumult shall be near,
And yon tall bark, in whirling eddies tost,
Sink overwhelm'd and in the abyss be lost."
So pleasure's sons spread wide their gilded sail,
Clear are the skies, propitious is the gale;
Its very whispers speak in accents gay—
"Loose all your canvas and enjoy the day;"
But sudden blasts arise, tornadoes blow,
And hurl their vessel in the deeps below.

E'en now Imagination sees on high
The gathering storm amid the southern sky,
Black as old Chaos, borne upon the blast,
With cloud on cloud in wild confusion cast,
It threats the earth, the eye of day invades,
And wraps the rising sea in awful shades—
The gull and curlew, shrieking, seek the land;
The savage breakers thunder on the strand;
All is commotion—in terrific form
Portentous, vast, the Genii of the storm,
Sails in his state sublime on whirlwind wings,
And o'er the earth wide devastation flings;
Now grasps the lightning, bids it tear away
The work of ages in the deadly fray,
While shiver'd rocks with loud percussion show
The wasting path of nature's direst foe!
Around his head at night the moon is seen,
Silvering his crown of clouds—whene'er between,
But for a moment darts her fitful ray,
Behold—where mounted in the milky spray
Of some huge wave, her mast amid the skies,
A dreadful wreck the quivering vessel flies.

That simple cottage underneath a thorn,
Where ivy wreaths the humble walls adorn,
The abode of Labour stands from envy free,
Blest in contented humble poverty.
Happy such poverty! no Envy near,
To cross its moments with suspicious fear;
Far, far, from hence she flies where monarchs dwell,
But ne'er invades this undisturbed cell:
While Health her richest roses sheds around,
And crowns laborious toil with slumbers sound:
No flaunting guards with silent step attend,
No flatt'ring courtiers here in reverence bend:
The peasant sleeps secure when tempests roar,
Nor fears the assassin's entrance at his door:
Nature for him her purest joy displays,
Gives him the opening morning's ruddy rays,
Bids her warm sun his healthful labours light,
And for his rest ordains the cheerful night;
For him has plac'd the forests grateful shade,
The grassy upland, and the sinking glade;
For him the rill its trickling torrent pours,
And the soft rain descends in vernal showers,

Wat'ring the little spot his skilful hand
Has chang'd from barren soil to fertile land.
There Independence, honest, bold and free,
And cheerfulness, and blest tranquillity,
Hold unmolested their delightful reign,
And scatter blessings o'er the small domain.
O who wou'd envy monarchs and their pride!
The most dependant, and the most belied!
Truth to their ears her accents never taught,
No friends have they, but always to be bought;
Suspicion, dark anxiety, and care,
Debar from rest, and all their moments share;
While luxury, the bane of mortal life,
Holds with disease a never varying strife,
Shortens their days, decays life's languid bloom,
And with their grandeur hides them in the tomb.
" Vouchsafe, O gracious heaven! bestow on me
A life of humble, tranquil poverty;
Enough to nature's needful wants supply,
And in my country cottage let me die,
After a life in search of wisdom spent,
Grateful to heaven for what its goodness sent;

Thankful that its allotments had been such,
As not to grant too little, or too much.
The golden mean, the point affix'd by heaven,
To which contentment, health, and peace are given—
Grant me but this—then silent and forgot,
The world I'll leave, nor steal beyond my cot."
Thus thinks the sage, who satiate with the past,
His hopes, his aims, on nobler views has cast.

Mount Edgcumbe! oft amid thy groves I've stray'd,
Where musing thoughts and sober wand'rings lead;
And mourned the ills of man, his bustling cares,
And the brief span his chequer'd life appears:
Alas! how little reck the aims of life—
Whether to mad ambition's dazzling strife,
Or low pursuit of Pleasure's siren ways,
We yield the few, irrevocable days—
Since nought from swift Oblivion's power can save
Or ward the summons of th' expectant grave—
"Lo!" Saladin the conqueror cried aloud,
And high in air he hung his regal shroud;

" Here, here is all shall Saladin contain!
This the reward of all his toil and pain:
Of all his conquest, honour, glory, crown,
Nought else will soon remain but his renown!"
Yet in thy shades will Meditation find,
A balm to heal this sickness of the mind,
Charm every woe, subdue each bursting sigh,
And bid the soul aspire to immortality.

Can the proud glare of courts with thee compare,
The haunts of folly, and retreats of care?
Kings are but dust, and empires must decay:
Give me to steal through life's uncertain day,
'Mid a retirement, calm and sweet as thine,
Where every humbler charm and grace combine.
For when the course of mortal life is run,
When all seems vanity beneath the sun—
When wean'd from life, from pleasure, and from care,
And all alike the same indifference share—
What will avail the toil for empty fame,
The hoarded treasure, or the conqueror's name,

Bought with intensest labour, risk, and pain,
Scarcely possess'd but to be lost again?

But see, pale twilight o'er the landscape steals,
And misty gloom envelopes all the vales.
How sweet is Evening, when the closing day,
Streaks all the west with her empurpled ray!
When slow descending in the ocean's bed,
The sun, its radiance ting'd with glowing red,
Shoots to the zenith all its pointed beams,
Then sinking fades, till eve's bright planet gleams.
The labourer homeward from his finish'd toil,
Trudges with heavy footstep o'er the soil,
The hamlets smoke to raise the supper fires,
The hum of bees, and noise of day expires,
The chrystal dews with grateful softness fall,
And the black shadows mark day's funeral.
Hark! how like thunder all the dales around,
The woods, hills, waters, and the champaign ground,
Now heard, now lost, as through the air it flies,
The evening gun in distant echoes dies—

While slow and solemn, from yon aged tower,
The curfew sounds o'er many a dell and bower—
O'er many a wood and lake its lonely roar
Rebounds from hill to hill, from shore to shore.

Farewell Mount Edgcumbe, all thy calm retreats,
Thy lovely prospects, and thy mossy seats!
Farewell, the coolness of thy dark deep woods!
Farewell, the grandeur of thy circling floods!
Where'er futurity may lead my way,
Where in this vale of life I chance to stray,
Imagination to thy scenes shall turn,
Dwell on thy charms and for thy beauties burn.
For me ere long thy woods shall wave no more,
Nor evening find me pacing to explore
Thy shadowy haunts; for others they shall bloom,
And strangers meditate amid their gloom.
Yet where a hapless wanderer I may roam—
As the poor exile from his native home—
The last fond dream of earth that meets my eyes,
Shall be thy lawns and groves, and azure tinted skies.

FINIS.

645220

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

YC16[illegible]